

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE
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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, LE, IS

SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION

REF: STATE 67981

UK EMBASSY HAS PASSED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON RECENT
UK TALKS WITH KEY FIGURES:

-- UK AMBASSADOR IN TEL AVIV HAD TRIED TO DISCUSS SOUTH
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LEBANON SITUATION WITH DAYAN WHO MADE CLEAR HE HAD NOTHING
TO DO WITH THE ISRAELI RAID INTO LEBANON, SAID THERE WAS
NOTHING HE WOULD BE WILLING TO SAY ON THE MATTER, AND
ADVISED THE AMBASSADOR TO SEE BEGIN.

-- AMBASSADOR SAW BEGIN ON MARCH 17. BEGIN MADE CLEAR
THAT ISRAEL HAD NOT THE SLIGHTEST WISH TO REMAIN IN SOUTH

LEBANON, BUT DID NOT WANT TO WITHDRAW LEAVING BEHIND A VACUUM. HE POSED VIRTUALLY THE SAME QUESTIONS AS HE HAD EARLIER POSED TO CHARGE VIETS. - N- CLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE DID NOT RPT NOT O JE IN PRINCIPLE TO A SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION WHICH SET UP A UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE AS LONG AS IT COULD ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSES.

-- AMBASSADOR LATER SAW EVRON, WHO EXPRESSED VIEW THAT AN INEFFECTIVE UN PRESENCE IN SOUTHERN LEBANON WOULD BE WORSE FROM THE ISRAELI POINT OF VIEW THAN NO FORCE AT ALL, SINCE IT WOULD BE IN THE WAY IF ISRAEL HAD TO RETALIATE AGAIN. THE BEST SOLUTION WOULD BE A STRONG LEBANESE ARMY PRESENCE IN THE AREA, BUT HE SENSED THIS WOULD BE HARD TO ACHIEVE. HE SPECULATED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF HAVING THE SYRIANS TAKE CONTROL OF ALL BRIDGES ACROSS THE LITANI RIVER.

-- EVRON INDICATED FAIRLY CLEARLY THAT DAYAN PERSONALLY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY GENERALLY FELT THAT THE DEFENSE MINISTRY AND BEGIN HAD PROCEEDED WITH THE LEBANESE INCURSION WITHOUT PLANNING FOR WHAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DONE AFTER THE MILITARY OPERATION WAS CONCLUDED. HE INDICATED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WAS NOW GRAPPLING WITH THE PROBLEM OF HOW TO EXTRICATE ISRAEL FROM THE DILEMMA IT WAS FACING. THIS WAS THE REASON FOR HIS INTERESTING SPECULA-
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TION ABOUT SYRIAN INVOLVEMENT IN CONTROLLING THE ZONE BELOW THE LITANI.

-- ON MARCH 17, PRIOR TO KHADDAM'S ARRIVAL IN BEIRUT, UK AMBASSADOR SAW BOUTROS. BOUTROS SAID HE SHARED THE UK VIEWPOINT THAT ANY SC RESOLUTION SHOULD NOT FOCUS ON CONDEMNING ISRAEL BUT SHOULD TAKE A MORE POSITIVE VIEWPOINT. BOUTROS THOUGHT IT WOULD BE USELESS TO TRY FOR A RESOLUTION WHICH WOULD BE OPPOSED STRONGLY BY SYRIA. HIS VIEWS AS REGARDS THE PEACEMAKING FORCE WERE CONDITIONED BY: (A) THE SYRIAN ATTITUDES; AND (B) THE ATTITUDES OF CHRISTIAN "LEBANESE FRONT", WHOSE LEADERS WERE FEARFUL THAT ANY PEACEKEEPING FORCE IN THE SOUTH WOULD RESULT IN THE NORTHWARD MOVEMENT OF MAJOR PALESTINIAN ARMED FORCES. HE ASKED THE AMBASSADOR TO TALK TO CHAMOUN ABOUT THIS PROBLEM AND PAINT THE REALITIES FOR HIM. AMBASSADOR AGREED TO DO SO.

-- BOUTROS ASKED UK AMBASSADOR WHAT KIND OF MANDATE A UN FORCE WOULD HAVE; WOULD IT HAVE AUTHORITY TO USE FORCE TO CONTROL THE AREA? THE UK AMBASSADOR SAID THAT HMG FELT IT WOULD HAVE TO HAVE THIS AUTHORITY.

-- BOUTROS WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT THE LEBANESE ARMY COULD BE DEPLOYED TO THE SOUTH. THE LEBANESE FELT THAT, WITHOUT COMPLETE SYRIAN SUPPORT, THEY COULD NOT COUNT ON KEEPING LINES OF COMMUNICATION OPEN TO THE SOUTH.

-- UK AMBASSADOR'S GENERAL IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, WAS THAT NEITHER BOUTROS NOR SARKIS HAD A CLOSED MIND ON THE UN PEACEKEEPING FORCE CONCEPT.

-- URQUHART IN NEW YORK TOLD UK MISSION HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO SET UP UN FORCE FAIRLY QUICKLY, PROVIDED THE ISRAELIS AND LEBANESE CONSENTED TO THE IDEA, AND PROVIDED IT HAD THE BLESSING OF THE SYRIANS, IN
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PARTICULAR, AND THE "ARAB LEAGUE" (APPARENTLY MEANING GENERAL ARAB WORLD ACQUIESCENCE).

-- URQUHART, DRAWING ON EXPERIENCE IN SETTING UP UNEF, THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD BE ESSENTIAL TO INCLUDE TROOPS FROM EASTERN EUROPE IN SUCH A FORCE IN ORDER TO GET A SOVIET BLESSING.

-- HE THOUGHT THAT A FORCE OF 12,000-15,000 MEN MIGHT BE REQUIRED.

-- ITS MANDATE, HE SUGGESTED, SHOULD CLEARLY PROVIDE AUTHORITY TO USE ARMED FORCE AND TO TAKE PEOPLE UNDER ARREST. VANCE

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